CHAPTER—III

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MODERN HUMAN SITUATION

Being the highest point of contemporary consciousness, literature acts as a faithful mirror to its times. The events and ideas in the early years of the present century, brought about a revolution in the realm of scientific, moral and spiritual thought. The prominent writers of our age like, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, L.H. Myers, T.S. Eliot, and W.B. Yeats, show their deep concern for the spiritual predicament of modern man who has lost his moorings in religion and God. D.H. Lawrence rightly points out that the "great desire today is to deny the religious impulse altogether". There is an atmosphere of moral unease and uncertainty, a collapse of faith in the accepted patterns of social relationships. "Never before", observes Paul Brunton, "were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much perplexity and unsettlement".

There are several factors that have contributed towards the element of uncertainty and doubt in the social and spiritual life of the west in the early years of the present century. First, there is the complete disappearance of the folklorist ways of life with the rapid growth of industrialisation and urbanisation. It gave rise to some peculiar problems like the problem of religious disbelief, a significant increase in vice and crime, fall in standards or
sexual morality, etc. Urbanisation led to the decline of spiritual and ethical values and their gradual replacement by commercial values. All human considerations were cast aside and the possession of wealth came to be regarded as an unmistakable sign of nobility and gentlemanliness. Poverty was equated with vice. Money formed the basis of all human relationship. D.H. Lawrence rightly points out: "It's quite true, you can't live without cash", said May. "You've got to have certain amount of it to be able to live and get along.....even to be free to think you must have a certain amount of money or your stomach stops you". Making a sad comment on modern generation Lawrence says, "what the lads want is just money to enjoy themselves, and the girls the same, with the fine clothes: and they don't care about another thing..... They haven't enough seriousness to take anything really serious and they never will have". The whole society came to be governed by an acquisitional ethos. Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair*, was very critical of the false prestige born of the acquisition of cash. Thus, the decline of the rural way of life implies the decay of certain spiritual values and the establishment of material values in an urban society.

The industrial civilization, with its advanced machine and technology, has dragged man into a useless mechanical existence. Since, religions, which once provided men with their ideals, have lost power and man has replaced them by the cult of efficiency, good time and comfort. Henery Wimbush in *Crome Yellow* (1921) seems to echo Huxley's own sentiments,
when he complains that the "country was desolate without life of its own, without indigenous pleasures". Industrialization has not only destroyed the old culture of the people which once found its expression in folk songs, dances, rustic crafts, etc. but also offers a uniform kind of entertainment, which dulls rather than sharpens the aesthetic sensibility of our age. The cinema, the radio, the television, the popular literature, have had a deep impact in the life of contemporary civilization. I.A. Richards in Principles of Literary Criticism (1925) gives a very apt comment: "At present, bad literature, bad art, the cinema etc. are an influence of the first importance in fixing, an immature and actually inapplicable attitude to most things. Even the decision as to what constitutes a pretty girl or a handsome young man, an affair apparently natural and personal enough is largely determined by magazine covers and movie stars". It seems as if society had lost its intelligence, memory and moral purpose.

The First World War brought about a nerve-shattering experience. The modern man lost his faith in accepted values in every sphere of life. The early years of the present century witnessed a near complete breakdown in the existing social, economic and moral system. An era of moral perplexity and uncertainty was ushered in. David Daiches makes it clear by saying: "The relative stability of the Victorian world gave way to something much more confused and uncertain, and the shock to all established ideas provided by the First World
War, and the revelation of its horrors and futility helped to 'carry alive into the heart by passion' (in Wordsworth's phrase) the sense of this breakdown.

The years following the great deluge, i.e. the First World War, were the most troublesome period in the history of human civilization. This period witnessed the dominance of futilitarian philosophy, which was the natural consequence of the decay of faith and the loss of certitude in the matters of religion and ethics. The wings of the mind and spirit were folded in chill exhaustion. Human behaviour began to be interpreted in terms of glands and conditional reflexes. The hormones could be substituted for virtue and vice and the atom for the absolute. The belief that the universe has a design seemed to have been shattered. Man is not sure of his place in the cosmos. "Not only uncertainty but atomism", observes Sisir Kumar Ghose, "the fragmentation of modern life ('These fragments I have shored against my ruins') such awareness of the provisional nature of all experiences and explanations does not permit one to see it steadily and see it whole". One can find that the climate was pervaded with moral confusion and men were assailed by flux and doubt.

Aldous Huxley is one of the most significant writers of post-war era and its disillusionment. He is an apostle of the lost generation. His novels represent a faithful record of contemporary consciousness and offer a remarkable social criticism of life. The mood of cynicism, uncertainty and
insecurity, found an accurate presentation in his novels and non-fictional works. Ghose rightly points out that "Huxley's versatility is unquestioned. With his rich store of queer information and observations, his 'tons of ratiocination', the penetrating eye, which sees through all pretensions, past and present, he provides us with a living chart of the climate of opinion in a baffled, war-torn and suicidal civilization".

The most vulnerable effect of the First-World War is that it strained the authoritarian-pattern of family relationships and increased tensions and frustrations. The reaction of the post-war world has been to suspect all manifestations of authority. It may be called an era of revolt against authority, for all types of authority, whether parental, official or commercial, came to be flouted and disregarded. Political and religious scepticism, general disillusionment, cynicism, irony etc. were all-pervading. A.C. Ward clinches the point by saying that the people were "convinced of the bankruptcy of existing constitutions and sceptical not only of all its authority but also of all who aimed at authority".

The temper of the age became anti-heroic and 'action' and 'success' in a worldly sense became questionable values. The hero in the inter-war novel is a person to whom things happen: he is an 'anti-hero', a neurotic, a cripple, emotionally if not physically. In D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) Clifford is physically handicapped and his physical
disability symbolises spiritual impotence. Many of Huxley's characters like Denis and Scogan in Crome Yellow, Gumbril Junior and Myra Viveash in Antic Hay, Mrs Aldwinkle in Those Barran Leaves, Marry and Helen Amberely in Eyeless In Gaza (1936) have lost all moorings of ethics and religion, they are all moving about purposelessly on the wild waves of sensation and sensuality. These shipwrecked victims seek pleasant sensation and show a strong desire for an escape from any kind of social and moral obligations of society.

In Crome Yellow (1921) Anne's attitude towards life is revealed in the statement: "One enjoys the pleasant things, avoids the nasty one". She hardly exhibits any decency or purpose in her life. She flirts with Ivor and would like to flirt with Denis. In Point Counter Point (1928), Spandrell is devoted to the demonstration of what he feels are the world's illusions. He believes in destruction rather than construction. When an old courtesan is tenderly admiring the beauty of flowers, he diabolically destroys them.

The new discoveries in the fields of Biology, Anthropology, Psychology, Astronomy and Physics, made a deep impact on social, moral and spiritual ideas of contemporary civilization. These new discoveries particularly undermined the absoluteness of religious belief and traditional values. In the later half of the nineteenth century, a comparative study of various religions conducted by the German philosopher Max Muller and other contemporary religious scholars
shattered the false notion of the superiority of Christianity. Max Muller made it clear that the Western view of life laid emphasis on dynamic activity, fortified by the evolutionary philosophy with its stress upon the 'Struggle for Life' and 'Survival of the fittest'. He, however, strove to "combat the narrow and bigoted views of missionaries" and theologians.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution particularly threatened the very basis of Christian faith. According to Darwin's theory of evolution man's whole nature - physical, mental, intellectual and moral - was developed from lower animals by means of same laws of variation and survival. Darwin destroyed man's pride and egocentricity and made him merely a speck in the historical sweep of biological changes', 'a transitional figure in an evolutionary process'. Max Planck's quantum theory also endorsed the same notion. According to Planck, radiant energy is not emitted or absorbed continuously but discontinuously in the form of small packets of energy called quanta. Einstein's 'theory of Relativity proved that man cannot see the objective reality clearly; he distorts reality in the very process of observing it. Heisenberg in 1927 proposed a principle, known as 'Uncertainty Principle'. According to Heisenberg, we can never accurately measure both the position and velocity (momentum) of any partical or object. In other words, Uncertainty Principle is the fundamental limit of nature. All these theories shattered the concept of stability of the world and brought in the element of uncertainty and doubt in our age.
The psychological theories propounded by Freud and later by Jung and Bergson brought about a revolutionary change in the assessment of human behaviour. Freud's findings were rooted in a theory of biological instincts. He affirmed that the unconscious plays a very significant role in shaping human conduct. Man's intellectual convictions, he points out, are actually the rationalization of his emotional needs. It was discovered that both the normal and the abnormal displayed certain neurotic symptoms. This has had a profound influence on 20th century moral attitude specially in matters of sex. Thus, Freud and his followers have shown conclusively that repressed sex instincts are at the root of much neurosis and other signs of abnormality. His theory of "the Oedipus Complex" caused a sensation and it is being freely exploited by 20th century writers. The study of the sub-conscious even the unconscious, has become a major theme of modern literature. Intellect is no longer regarded as the means of true and real understanding.

As a result of the teachings of modern psychology, man is no longer considered self-responsible or rational in his behaviour. The theory of 'Oedipus Complex', exercised a profound impact on private and family relationships. It was accepted that mothers could be jealous of their daughters, that sons were more attached to their mothers and daughters to their fathers and that sex was at the back of such attachments. Hamlet has been interpreted by Ernest Jones, Freud's most distinguished British disciple, in terms of
'Oedipus Complex'. D.H. Lawrence also shows his major concern for 'Oedipus Complex' while presenting the private and family relationships in his novels especially in *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*.

II

The new scientific and psycho-analytical discoveries have delivered a severe blow to the modern Western man's faith in God and religion. Religious controversies no longer exercise any significant influence on public issues. Moral and ethical values are no longer regarded as absolute. Gone are the days when the Christian conception of man as 'inherently the child of sin, as belonging at once to the natural and to the transcendent world, and owing his possibilities of salvation to the grace of God' was unquestionably accepted. Anthropological discoveries undermined the absoluteness of religious and ethical systems. A.G. George rightly points out that the conception of "time, space, matter, energy, mind freedom, consciousness and almost all the basic concepts of thought are being given completely new interpretations and meanings"\(^1\). There began efforts to arrive at different metaphysical pictures of man. Freud projected man as a biological phenomenon, 'a prey to instinctual desires'. This is accepting man simply as a part of nature in the typical Darwinian tradition. To Marxists, man is the outcome of economic and social forces. Bertrand Russell sees man's aspirations and hopes as 'but the outcome of chance collocations of atoms'. Thus, the very basic conceptions of
man and his existence got confused and ultimately modern man has lost his moorings in religion and traditional beliefs.

No religion can hope to survive if it does not satisfy the scientific temper of the age. Religion, as it is generally considered, is opposed to the spirit of science. Because the method of science is empirical while that of religion is dogmatic. A modern man with scientific outlook cannot take refuge in dogmatism. Bertrand Russell refutes all the traditional arguments which have been used to assert the existence of God or the immortality of the soul. He is an adherent of the scientific method and asserts, "God and immortality, the central dogmas of the christian religion, find no support in science"[1]. Russell believes that the human intellect is unable to find conclusive answers to many questions of profound importance to mankind and refuses to accept that "there is some higher way of knowing by which we can discover truths hidden from science and intellect"[1]. He does not admit any method of arriving at the truth except that of science. "Whatever knowledge is attainable" says Russell, "must be attained by scientific methods and what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know"[15]. Thus, the present age of ours has witnessed a gradual weakening of religious faith and traditional ways of life.

The important writers of our age draw our attention towards the problem of religious belief. D.H. Lawrence in his novel Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) sadly comments on the
spiritual predicament of modern man:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is no smooth road into the future: but we go round or scramble over the obstacles. We’ve got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.\(^{18}\)

With the Victorian ethos in a state of dissolution, it was difficult for the post-war writer to accept Christianity as a source of values. In fact, as A.C. Ward points out, the post-war period witnessed an unprecedented weakening of faith in Christian values\(^{17}\). Aldous Huxley also deplored that "there exists no single set of authoritative books" and that the "common ground of all Western cultures has slipped away from under our feet"\(^{18}\). Lucy Tantamount in Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) complains that she no longer believes in God and morals, for she "came out of the chrysalis during the War, when the bottom had been knocked out of everything"\(^{19}\). D.H. Lawrence also regrets that "the Christian venture is done" and "the adventure is gone out of Christianity"\(^{20}\).

The breakdown of Christianity led the modern civilisation towards agnosticism in matters of belief and indifference in regard to value. "The Zeitgeist", writes Huxley, "is a most tyrannous spirit; to evade its imperatives seems for a sensitive artist, to be all but impossible"\(^{21}\). The spirit of the age, in the twenties, observes David Daiches, "was agnostic and Left-Wing"\(^{22}\). Modern writers found it hard to escape the agnosticism of the present century. The ideal of
mysticism is either ignored, or else, it becomes an object of ridicule, Guy Lambourne, the central character of Huxley's story 'Happily Ever After', claims that he does not "look forward to golden harps of anything of that sort"\textsuperscript{13}, and thus rejects belief in any posthumous existence. Philip Quarles in Point Counter Point seems to be a spokesman of Huxley, when he tells his wife Elinor that he has adopted a "kind of Pyrrhonian indifference"\textsuperscript{24} as his attitude towards life and religion. As the "amused Pyrrhonic aesthete", Huxley laughs at the sanctities of religion.

On account of his loss of faith in God and religion, modern man has suffered from rootlessness and anxiety which has become the most common characteristic of the literature of that age. The spirit of the age reflects, in short, a crisis based upon an 'internal schism of the soul'.

The modern western man is confronted with the vision of himself straying naked and forlorn through an indifferent universe. Ignoring the values of ancient wisdom, modern man has nothing but science and information as substitutes for faith and religion. But then science is knowledge not wisdom. Aldous Huxley regrets that "ours is a world in which knowledge accumulates and wisdom decays"\textsuperscript{25}. Denis Stone, the hero of Huxley's Crome Yellow, is also a rootless figure whom Colin Wilson calls "hopelessly unheroic"\textsuperscript{24}. Denis is a poet and novelist who looks at life through the spectacles of books and cannot accept anything, unless it finds its rational justification. He complains to Anne: "I can take nothing for
granted, I can enjoy nothing as it comes along beauty, pleasure, art, women...... I have to invent an excuse......". His Hamlet-like nature does not allow him to act as a man of action. His attempts to act always end in humiliation and disgust.

In Those Barran Leaves (1925) Huxley presents Barbara who is a selfish hypocrite and thirsty for pleasures of the most vulgar kinds. She has taken her stand in the heart of a wasteland and her life suggests only disgust and meaninglessness. Mrs Aldwinkle in the same novel indulges in all kinds of erotic pleasures. She is unable to distinguish between falsehood and reality. In Island (1962) Will Farnaby's disillusionment stems from the insane world where he had to work. He says, "I lived in that maggot-world for months. Lived in it, worked in it..... all without the least interest in what I was doing. Without the least enjoyment or relish, completely desireless". Aldous Huxley seems to be seriously involved in documenting the agony, despair and diabolism of our age.

Most of the significant writers of the 20th century viz. Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot came to believe that scientific progress has brought about degeneration rather than advancement. The pressures and complexities of technologically advanced society have resulted in mental stress, psychological distress and social deprivation among people. Trajan in Virgil Gheorgious' The Twenty Fifth Hour (1950) aptly suggests: "The
West has created a society which resembles a machine. It forces men to live in the heart of this society and to adapt themselves to the laws of the machine. When men come to resemble machines..... then there will be no more men on the face of the earth". Too much faith in machines has succeeded in reducing life itself to mechanism, too much faith in material progress, in reducing experience to only meaningless and dull routine. Aldous Huxley thus gives his reaction in *Point Counter Point* (1928):

> Mechanical progress means more specialisation and standardization of work, means more readymade and unindividual amusements, means diminution of initiative and creativeness---- means increased boredom and restlessness, means finally a kind of individual madness that can only result in social revolution. Count on them or not, war and revolutions are inevitable, if things are allowed to go on as they are at present".

In the modern scientific world, the instruments and materials have been taken for realities. Aldous Huxley expresses his dissatisfaction with the materialistic interpretation of the universe and maintains that science deals with abstractions and partial knowledge and reflects its inability to view life as an organic whole. He writes, "many men of science have come to realise that the scientific picture of the world is a partial one - the product of their special competence in mathematics and their special incompetence to deal systematically with aesthetic and moral values, religious experiences and intuitions of significance".
The inner province of human life, which is concerned with the soul, is not at all touched by science. Science does not take into account human affections and sympathies, love and friendships, beauty and goodness, mystical ecstasy, etc. These things are outside the scope of science. Aldous Huxley rightly points out that "Reality as actually experienced contains intuitions of value and significance, love, beauty, mystical ecstasy, intimations of God-head. Science did not and still does not possess intellectual instruments with which to deal with these aspects of reality".

Huxley has portrayed in his novels a series of scientists who are deeply committed to the compartmentalized knowledge of science and, therefore, unable to grasp the reality of life and the experience of living and loving. His major characters are disillusioned with materialism, and their main concern is with the problem of self-awareness. In _Those Barren Leaves_ (1925) he expresses his disgust with the "tameness and sameness" of mechanical life and insists that one should lead a life of perceptive awareness. In _Brave New World_ (1932) Huxley creates a frightening and horrifying picture of the universe where science has transformed men into conditioned robots nurtured in testtubes. Through Savage he reveals his disgust with materialistic and mechanistic conception of the universe. He says:

"'I ate civilization! 'What?' 'it poisoned me; I was defiled. And then', he added, in a lower tone, 'I ate my own wickedness'". 
Savage shows his keen desire for a value-oriented world where life is provided with meaning and purpose. In *After Many A Summer* (1939), Propter denounces Dr Obispo's programme for increasing the span of human life through scientific experiments. He believes that this programme is directed towards the permanence of evil in the world.

It seems true that modern mechanical system, instead of bringing peace, unity and integration, tends to create various kinds of alienations - alienations from self, from one's fellowmen, from society and finally from God or the mystery of being. It seems that loneliness or solitariness has become the main theme of modern literature. David Daiches aptly points out: "Loneliness is seen as the necessary condition of man..... and the desire to escape from loneliness one of the chief human pre-occupations"34. Aldous Huxley seems to be fully conscious of this solitariness and rootlessness in the life of an individual. In a letter to Robert Nicholas Huxley writes that "men are more solitary now then they were; all authority has gone, the tribe has disappeared and every at all conscious man stands alone surrounded by other solitary individuals and fragments of the old tribe, for which he feels no respect"35.

L.H. Myers's basic theme in his novel *The Near and the Far* (1929), as it appears, is man's alienation from the centre, the spirit and his specific spiritual problem: the recovery of his own identity. Myers seeks to show how man
borrows his identity from the surrounding world, supresses his true self and alienates himself from the truth of his being. He stands in isolation, with "the darkness of the night in his mind". And this darkness as Myers puts it, is the darkness of "the whole long night of humanity's suffering and evil-doing". D.H. Lawrence defines this isolation of modern life as "the cruel sense of finished aloneness". In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) we see that the heroine is "haunted by images of herself in a lonely tower cut off from the cheerful conversation and activities of the people outside". To overcome this isolation and solitariness, to soothe his agonised soul, modern man tries to seek an escape from his existence into some imaginary world through which he can discover his own identity.

III

The quest for identity has become one of the most predominant pre-occupations of the twentieth century Western writer who has lost his spiritual moorings. It seems that he is desperately in search of a spiritual nexus that can provide unity and wholeness, peace and joy to his dejected and strayed life. Dennis H. Wrong rightly points out that the terms "identity" and "identity crisis" are the "semantic beacons of our time", for these "verbal emblems express our discontent with modern life and modern society". Loss of faith in God and religion, in old certainties and dogmas led the most of the writers of our age to look into the future as if into a
vacuum. In a frightening emptiness modern man does not know how to find a solution to the ills of modern life. Nikolai Berdyaev avers: "European man stands amid a frightening emptiness. He no longer knows where the key-stone of his life may be found, beneath his fear he feels no depth of solidity". Therefore, the term "identity" as observes Dennis H. Wrong, has become "a value-charged, almost a charismatic term, with its secure achievement regarded as equivalent to personal salvation". It is this theme of personal salvation that seems to be the informing principle of those sensitive writers who are deeply distressed at the spiritual predicament of modern man.

Though under the impact of science and technology and the growing spirit of rationalism, modern western writer has become sceptical about God and religion, it does not mean that religion is no longer a source of inspiration in the twentieth century literature. Man cannot do without religion, for it is belief that lends reality to his existence. Karl Jespers indicates this spiritual urge in man by saying that the modern man "devoting more decisive thought to the nature of his own being". L.H. Myers opines "The plain man had a plain need for some sort of religion..... a religion was what every honest man wanted". The disintegration of faith and traditional beliefs had led writers of the twentieth century to seek refuge from uncertainty and perplexity in some mystical experience.
In the search for salvation or a kind of mystical experience, there are some writers in the present century who return to old, dogmatic Christianity. In the works of T.S. Eliot, Francis Thompson, and Graham Green we find Christian mysticism in orthodox forms. W.B. Yeats is a mystic visionary, in whose poetry the gods and fairies of Celtic mythology live again. Yeats builds up a personal 'system' out of occultism. T.S. Eliot searches for this pattern in the close similarity between myths of different peoples and the European literary tradition. T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men* (1925) and a host of other poems brings out the full horror and misery of spiritual sterility. However, in his poems written after 1928, he depicts the struggle of the human soul for salvation and he does so through the use of the traditional material and imagery of Christianity.

During the first half of the twentieth century, when the post-war writer found it difficult to accept the Christian metaphysical framework as a source of values, there began a search for new values, new beliefs, new attitudes in order to redeem life from meaninglessness and despair. As a result, there emerges a steadily growing interest in Eastern philosophy on the part of Westerners. There have been new adventures in ideas and in keeping with the spirit of the times, certain Western scholars and writers have become more and more receptive to Oriental mysticism. L.H. Myers and Aldous Huxley were attracted by Eastern ways to reach salvation or redemption. In their last novels, *The Pool of*
Vishnu (1940) and Island (1962) there are valuable expressions of Vedantic and Buddhist approaches to enlightenment, respectively.

Aldous Huxley believes that mysticism alone can provide man with a synthetic view of reality. An ideal man is the non-attached mystic who experiences integration and peace through the mystical experience. Huxley comes to believe that a theocentric Saint can answer the spiritual needs of modern man, for the "mystics are channels through which a little knowledge of reality filters down into the human universe of ignorance and illusion." His The Perennial Philosophy (1945) pierces the veil of maya and makes man aware of the abiding reality, behind the shifting shadows of phenomena. In his earlier writings, Huxley's attitude towards mysticism, however, was negative. But in his later writings, he advocates it as the only satisfying philosophy for modern man. Anthony Beavis, the hero of Huxley's Eyeless In Gaza (1936) undergoes conversion under the benign influence of Dr Miller, who professes a belief in Vedanta and Zen Buddhism. Dr Miller convinces Anthony that his "What's-the-good-of-it all attitude", is due to his ignorance of the primeordial reality. He convinces Anthony that the awareness of the ultimate spiritual principle and a conscious control of the body lead to the unitive experience of the spiritual reality.

In Ends And Means (1937) Huxley advocates meditation as a "method for acquiring knowledge about the essential nature
of things, a method for establishing communion between the soul and the integrating principle of the universe". So far as Huxley's Mysticism is concerned it remains within the framework of Hindu as well as Christian tradition. In *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) Anthony Beavis reads *The Way of Perfection* along with following the principle of non-attachment as expounded in the *Gita*. Propter, another character in the same novel, talks about the inner self and illusory nature of the phenomenal reality in terms of *Vedanta*. But later on Huxley's mysticism drifts towards Buddhism and Tantrism and turns into sexual mysticism. As a severe critic of contemporary machine culture, Huxley seems to realise that contemplation, in the words of J.B. Coates, "becomes increasingly more difficult in an age whose tempo is determined by machine". In *Island* (1962) Huxley expresses his conviction that human body can be a valid means of salvation. He investigates the possibility of mystical experience through sexual love and psychedelic drugs.

L.H. Myers is one of the significant writers of the twentieth century, who focusses his attention on the spiritual problem of modern civilization. G.S. Fraser rightly remarks: "It is with spiritual rather than ordinary social problems that Myers is concerned". In his preface to *The Pool of Vishnu* (1940) Myers himself says: "I have made little attempt to conceal my ethical preoccupations". He realises that Christianity could not offer a satisfactory philosophy of existence. In *The Root and the Flower* (1935) he writes, "those
simple prayers to the simple Christian God did not satisfy him. He turns towards Oriental philosophy and religion to find a solution to the problem of harmony between the outer and the inner modes of life and to look for a way to self-enlightenment. Myers's concern with Eastern philosophy is quite evident in the way in which he makes use of the Hindu concept of Maya, the Hindu doctrine of tat-tvam asi, and the Vedantic technique of self-enlightenment in The Near and the Far (1943), his well-known tetralogy.

L.H. Myers also reveals his acquaintance with Hinayana Buddhism and Tantric philosophy. In The Root and the Flower (1935) Myers presents the Hinayana attitude to life and Nirvana in the character of Rajah Amar. But while presenting it, he shows that Hinayana Buddhism is an inadequate ideal as it insists on renunciation of the world for mystical experience. Rajah Amar as a Hinayanist seeks "the tranquillity that is at the end of all desires", a state of calm desirelessness in which one is liberated from all worldly bonds. Aldous Huxley too disapproves of the Hinayana form of spirituality which is mere quietism and which allows a man to bury himself "in Emptiness". Another cult which receives critical treatment in the writings of L.H. Myers, is the Tantric way or Shaktism. Gunevati, a character in Myers's tetralogy, represents "the religion of sex" as a way of apprehending Reality.

D.H. Lawrence, one of the most prominent writers of our
age, also rejects Christianity, for it discards the human body as unholy and sinful, and upholds the life of abstract spiritualism. He not only rejects Christianity by saying that "the Christian-venture is done", and that "the adventure is gone out of Christianity," but also advocates that "we must start on a new venture towards God". He, however, conducts his search for the lost God outside the Christian tradition. D.H. Lawrence has his mystic "religoin of the blood" and shows his concern for strange dark gods because they could be realised through his 'blood consciousness'. He makes it clear in a letter to his friend Ernest Collings:

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect, we can go wrong in our minds. But, what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about knowledge? All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or morals, or what not.

Lawrence is a kind of blood-mystic. Though he rejects Christianity and other missionary religions, yet his highest ideal remains salvation. Like Aldons Huxley, he believes that isolation, disillusionment and despair of modern life can only be overcome through a mystical experience. Lawrence regrets that the "great desire today is to deny the religious impulse altogether, or else to assert its absolute alienity from the sexual impulse". He associates sex with spirituality and advocates sexual experience as a potent means of liberation. Lawrence's sexual mysticism seems to be very close to Tantrism which emphasises that sex is a natural activity and has a
transcendental and esoteric side which can be fruitfully utilized to reveal to man the mystery of the universe.

A Tantric's attitude towards sex is shaped by his belief that all being Shiva nothing is profane. The Christian distinction between sacred and profane love is foreign to his philosophy. He regards sexual experience as a valid and efficacious way to Salvation. Though Lawrence told Earl Brewster that he "always worshipped Siva"58, there is no evidence to suggest that like his great contemporary, Aldous Huxley, Lawrence ever came under the spell of Buddhism and Tantrism. He rejected Eastern philosophical framework and asserted that it is "ridiculous to look to the East for inspiration"59. A critical analysis of Lawrence's 'Dionysian Mysticism' can justify his advocacy of sexual experience as a means of spiritual salvation. This part of the study is an attempt to analyse the spiritual predicament of modern man who has lost his moorings in religion and God. An effort has also been made to show how the important writers of our age like Aldous Huxley, L.H. Myers, and D.H. Lawrence try to solve this problem of religious belief in order to attain transcendental experience and peace which is the ultimate end of human existence.
Notes and References


4. ibid, p.110.


10. ibid, p.12.


